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ABSTRACT

According to this paper, the education profession can best serve the child and his family by training and encouraging parents to be better able to care for and educate their children. This objective would require emphasis upon developing communication, cooperation, and collaboration with parents to support the child's extra-academic education. It would also require educators to involve themselves in training parents and future parents in family care and education skills. Educational planners could then begin to develop the money, manpower, motivation, methods, materials, and models required to implement a life time and life space perspective on education. The objectives of enrolling children in school at five, four, or three years of age and of enrolling infants in developmental day care might appear less urgent if family care and education of children is strengthened and supported. (ST)

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION: THE CHILD, THE FAMILY AND THE EDUCATION PROFESSION

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Earl S. Schaefer

Research on early education, when integrated with research on the role of the family in child development, can be interpreted as suggesting the need for a new paradigm for education, for a new perspective, for a new consciousness, and for new or renewed structures-- professions and institutions--that will foster the development and education of the child. Research findings show minimal long-term effectiveness of early intervention and limited effectiveness of the schools in increasing the level of intellectual functioning initially developed and then maintained by the family. Thus the current professional emphasis upon supplementing family education and care of the child should be complemented by an emphasis upon strengthening and supporting family care and education of the child. Much of the research on early education has progressed from programs that have attempted to educate the child--child-centered programs--to programs that attempt to strengthen the family's contribution to the education of the child--parent-centered programs. The greater long-term effectiveness of parent-centered programs as contrasted to child-centered programs has major implications for the future of the education profession and other professions that relate to parents and children.

Generalizations from research on child development and early education.

Many of the generalizations from research on early development are drawn from reviews of research--on early intellectual development (Schaefer, 1970), on parent behavior and the child's intellectual

development and academic achievement (Hess, 1969; Schaefer, 1972) and on programs to develop parenting skills (Lazar and Chapman, 1972). Generalizations that would contribute to a new perspective on education and that have major implications for education will be briefly summarized here.

1. The mean level of intellectual functioning of children from each social group, as determined by the standard mental tests, is established during the first three years of life and can be determined at the time that mental tests begin to measure language skills. (Hindley, 1965; Terman, 1937; Van Alstyne, 1929). Studies of representative populations suggest that these differences tend to persist during the school years (Coleman, 1966; Terman, 1937, Kennedy, 1969). Thus the child's level of intellectual functioning is developed and maintained by his early and continuing environment.

2. Parent behaviors significantly influence the child's intellectual development and academic achievement (Hess, 1969; Schaefer, 1972; Moore, 1968). Parent behaviors tend to be stable through childhood (Schaefer and Bayley, 1960) and have a cumulative effect upon the child's intellectual development (Bayley and Schaefer, 1964; Moore, 1968). Evidence is accumulating that the home environment not only initially develops but also maintains the child's level of intellectual functioning and academic achievement (Douglas, 1964; Clarke and Clarke, 1959).

3. Although early, brief, child-centered intellectual stimulation programs have significant short-term effects upon the child's intellectual performance, the long-term effects appear to be small and often insignificant (Schaefer, 1972; Gray, and Klaus, 1969.
The response to this finding has taken three different directions: (1) Beginning programs earlier, including the first year of life, in order to

have a greater impact on the child's early development. (2) Continuing enrichment of the child's education--Follow-Through programs--in order to maintain the child's functioning. (3) Shifting the focus of the program from direct intervention with the child to training and supporting parental education of the child. Thus the new directions respond to three criticisms of the early education programs--they begin too late, they end too early, and they focus upon the child rather than the parent.

4. Parent-centered as contrasted with child-centered intervention programs seem to have equal short-term effectiveness at lower costs, may have greater long-term effe[illegible]d may result in higher levels of performance for younger children in the family. Parent-centered programs have been successfully used for an alternative as well as for a complement to pre-school programs (Lazar and Chapman, 1972). The extent of parent-centered intervention--both amount and length of time--required to produce long term effects upon child development is as yet undetermined, but it seems reasonable that parents as well as children require both early and continuing education. Although the number of studies, the nature of the samples used, and the length of follow-up to determine the effects of parent-centered information is limited; the available data complement the data on parent behavior and child development in suggesting that parents should be actively involved as students of the education process and as teachers of their own children in order to foster the development of their children.

Development of a new paradigm and a new perspective of education

Generalizations from research on parent behavior, child development, and early education suggest that the classroom model of education does not provide an adequate guide for planning early and continuing

education. Yet is is the classroom model that leads to recommendations that children be brought into an institutional setting under professional care at younger ages. In order to provide a new approach to early education, a new model was developed from data on parent behavior and child development (Schaefer, 1970). The model was named Ur-education to signify the most primitive--earliest and most basic--education of the child. Although the model was developed for early education, it may apply equally at later periods.

The first stage of Ur-education is the development by the parent or educator of a positive relationship to the child or student.

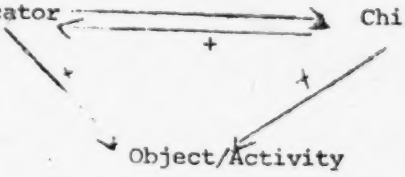
Stage 1. Parent/ Educator ——— + ———→ Child/ Student

Recent work on maternal bonding to the infant (Klaus, et al, 1972) as well as evidence of the stability of the parent's relationship to the child suggests that this first stage may be a critical period for early intervention. In the second stage the child responds with the development of a positive relationship to the parent/educator.

Stage 2. Parent/ Educator ⇄ (+ / +) Child/ Student

During the third stage the parent/educator and child/student share an activity or work with an object in the course of which the relationship is strengthened and the child learns language skills, other cognitive abilities, interests, and task-oriented behaviors of attentiveness and perseverance that contribute to academic achievement.

Stage 3. Parent/Educator ⇄ (+ / +) Child/Student



The fourth stage indicates that from these experiences the child develops the potential for independent learning or group learning. Perhaps the major reason some students cannot achieve in the classroom is that they have not developed the necessary behavior skills through Ur-education.

Stage 3. Child/Student $\overset{+}{\longleftrightarrow}$ Object/Activity

The Ur-education model might describe either parent and child or educator and student. However, the major influence of the family as contrasted to the school (Douglas, 1964) upon the child's intellectual and academic development led to an analysis of characteristics of family care and education that might be compared to professional care and education of the child (Schaefer, 1972). Although the list might be changed by addition or revision, the characteristics listed in Table I suggest that the family has a greater potential for Ur-education than the typical child care or education institution. In fact, an effective substitute for family care and education of children would require an institution that would have the characteristics of the family. Development of such an institution has not been feasible with the limited roles and responsibilities that are accepted by professionals.

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Evidence of the importance of the family in the care and education of the child suggested the development of two contrasting perspectives on education--the classroom perspective and a life-time and life-space perspective or ecological perspective that emphasizes the person learning through his interaction with his environment. Differences between the two perspectives are illustrated by different answers to

Table I

Major Characteristics of the Parent's Interaction with the Child

Priority	Parents influence the early development of relationships, language, interests, task-oriented behaviors, etc.
Duration	The parent's interactions with the child usually extend from birth to maturity.
Continuity	The parent-child interaction is usually not interrupted, particularly in early childhood, apart from brief separations. Concern about such interruptions has led to research on maternal separation and deprivation.
Amount	The total amount of time spent in parent-child interaction, particularly one-to-one interaction, is usually greater than with other adults.
Extensity	The parent shares more different situations and experiences with the child than do other adults.
Intensity	The degree of involvement between parent and child, whether that involvement is hostile or loving, is usually greater than between the child and other adults.
Pervasiveness	Parents potentially influence the child's use of the mass media, i. social relationships, his exposure to social institutions and professions, and much of the child's total experience, both inside and outside the home.
Consistency	Parents develop consistent patterns of behavior with children.
Responsibility	Both society and parents recognize the parent's primary responsibility for the child.
Variability	Great variability exists in parental care of children, varying from extremes of parental neglect and abuse to extremes of parental acceptance, involvement, and stimulation.

From Schaefer, E.S. Parents as educators: Evidence from cross-sectional longitudinal and intervention research. Young Children, April, 1972, 227-239.

questions about education in Table 2 (Schaefer, 1971). The two perspectives--a professional, institutional perspective and an ecological perspective--might also be applied to the field of child care, child welfare, and child health. Perhaps a major characteristic of the professional, institutional perspective is that the major goal is to supplement and, if needed, to supplant family education while the ecological perspective and the research data suggest the need to strengthen and support family education of the child.

Table 2

Two Perspectives on Education

Questions	Answers	
	The classroom perspective	The life-time and life-space perspective
Where is a person educated?	In the school	In total life space, including the home, mass media, and school
When does education occur?	In the school	During total life time, from birth to death
Who are the students?	School-age children	All who are engaged in the educational process--parents, peers, teachers, etc.
What is the role of the professional educator?	To teach the child	To be a leader and resource person for the ducational process.
How does one educate?	Through formal instruction	Through relationships, varied experience, language stimulation, etc.
What is being learned?	Academic skills	Relationships, interests, attitudes, behavior, language, cognitive skills, etc.

What are the major goals of education?	To master academic subjects and to earn academic credentials	To further individual development and to promote social adjustment and competence
What is the most important educational institution?	The school	The family

From Schaefer, E.S. Toward a revolution in education: A perspective from child development research. The National Elementary Principal, 1971, 51, 18-25.

Implications of new research and a new perspective for education

The research findings on parent behavior, child development and early education; the new paradigm for education--the UR-education model; the ecological perspective on education; and the new consciousness of the importance of the family in education have many implications for parents and the education profession. The evidence and the perspective suggest the need for a revolution in education--a return to the definitions of education that include "the act or process of rearing or bringing up. . ." and "the process of providing with knowledge, skill, competence or unusally desirable qualities of behavior and character. . ." (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged. Springfield, Mass.: G. & G. Merriam, Co., 1965) from an implicit definition of education as schooling--the child in the classroom with a professional educator. Parallel to the implicit definition of education as schooling have been the interpretations of parent involvement in education as supporters, service givers, and facilitators of schooling and, more recently, as teacher aides and volunteers in the classroom--interpretations that assume the parent's role is to contribute to the teacher's work in the classroom (Hess, et al., 1970).

However, Hess and his collaborators also note the emergence of new roles of parents--as students of the educational process and teachers of their

own children. Parallel to the new roles for parents would be new roles for teachers as trainers, supporters, and contributors to the parent's education of the child in the home.

A return to the more comprehensive definition of education would suggest new objectives for professional educators. Perhaps the major objective would be to influence the child's education in the home, community, and through the mass media from birth onward--before school entrance, evenings, weekends, holidays, vacations, and after the school years. This objective would require emphasis upon developing communication, cooperation, and collaboration with parents to support the child's extra-academic education. It would also require that educators involve themselves in training parents and future parents in family care and education skills. Educational planning would begin to develop the money, manpower, motivation, methods, materials, and models required to implement a life time and life space perspective on education. The objectives of enrolling children in school at five, four, or three years of age and of enrolling infants in developmental day care might appear less urgent if we begin to develop the alternative of strengthening and supporting family care and education of children.

The need to develop a support system for family care and education of the child is suggested by increasing evidence that the isolated nuclear family is not a self-sufficient unit. The ability of the family to care for and educate the child is weakened by stresses and strengthened by support from neighbors, friends, relatives, social groups, and relevant professionals. Personnel of effective programs of training and support for family care and education of the child have included public health nurses, social workers, educators, pediatricians, psychologists, and a variety of generalists and paraprofessionals. However, experimental programs cannot provide the early

and continuing support for increasing numbers of parents. Therefore new or renewed professions and institutions are needed that will provide the needed training and support throughout the life cycle. If the education profession could develop new roles they might provide training and experience in child care and education to future parents throughout the period of school attendance and also provide methods, materials, training, and consultation to parents of schoolage children. Training and support for family care and education of the child before school entrance might be provided by health personnel, by educators, or by a new discipline. A family support system might be developed parallel to and independent of the existing professions or it might be integrated into education through an ecological perspective on education.

Ideally, professional education will provide support for family education of the child. Research findings suggest that "Equality of Educational Opportunity" (Coleman, 1966) cannot be provided by schools alone. Schools are necessary but are not sufficient for the education of the child. Thus educators are not merely confronted with a "Crisis in the Classroom" (Silverman, 1970) but are confronted with a crisis in education. Educational progress requires attention not only to "Schools in the '70s" but also to Families in the '70s. The future of education will be determined by the response to the challenge of the demonstrated need for and the demonstrated feasibility of providing training and support for education in the home.

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